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Lucia A Keegan 07/31/2006 10:30:58 AM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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ACTION: UNESCO
INFO: POL ECON AMBU AMB AMBO DCM SCI

DISSEMINATION: UNESCOX
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:LVOLIVER
DRAFTED: POL:DOSTROFF
CLEARED: NONE

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FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [UNESCO](#) [SCUL](#)
SUBJECT: PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF UNESCO'S
WORLD HERITAGE CENTER

¶1. (U) Ambassador Oliver met today, July 27, with Mr. Kishore Rao, Deputy Director of the World Heritage Center (WHC) to discuss preparations for the management audit.

¶2. (U) The Ambassador said that several key elements are needed to ensure the audit would provide the results we need to improve the World Heritage Center's management and organization.

¶3. (U) She stressed that the number one priority is that the person selected come from an external consulting firm, and that the firm be seen as independent, objective, and credible.

¶4. (SBU) Rao asked whether the Office of Internal Oversight (IOS) or UNESCO's external auditor could be considered. The Ambassador said that while it would be useful to get the opinion of John Parsons, head of IOS, whom Rao is seeing tomorrow, it was imperative to have a truly independent consultant review the WHC. (Comment: The new external auditor replacing the Canadian auditor is French, having won that position through extensive lobbying by the French. End comment).

¶5. (U) The Ambassador mentioned that the United Nations Foundation had also agreed on the need to have an outside firm do the audit, and would be proposing several possible names in the coming days.

¶6. (U) Rao asked about BAASTEL, the Canadian firm, which had recently completed a Results Based Management report on the WHC. The Ambassador said that while the BAASTEL report could provide useful background to an outside consultant, BAASTEL was too closely tied to the WHC.

¶7. (U) The Ambassador said that the consultant must review the WHC in a comprehensive way, determining what exists today, what changes need to be made, and how the structure works with its advisory bodies, partners, funding, and its relationship with UNESCO's

Cultural sector.

¶18. (U) Ambassador Oliver said that any changes in the WHC should be driven by an evaluation of its long-term needs, rather than by making structural changes to balance the strengths and weaknesses of individuals currently in specific jobs.

¶19. (U) As one of UNESCO's flagship programs, the Ambassador told Rao that it is vital that the reputation, visibility and credibility of the WHC be reinforced through a comprehensive and independent review of the WHC's overall activities, particularly in connection with its advisory bodies and other partners. Ambassador Oliver also stressed the need for the consultant to reach out to key people at UNESCO, including member state representatives, who have a strong knowledge of the WHC's history and benefit from their expertise.

¶10. (U) The Ambassador and Rao agreed that the management audit is perfectly timed, as UNESCO will be looking at its medium term strategy and reviewing a new budget in the coming months. Bringing greater clarity to the WHC's management and organization at the same moment is a strong sign by member states that they support and wish to strengthen the WHC and its programs.

¶11. (U) Rao promised to work closely with the US Mission in formulating the Terms of Reference that will be used as the basis for the consulting contract.

¶12. (U) He noted that approximately 80K US dollars, which will come from the World Heritage Fund, have been earmarked by the World Heritage Committee to cover the costs of the management audit. The Ambassador mentioned that monies still remaining from the US Special Account could also be made available, if need be, to ensure the audit not be cut short because of funding problems.

¶13. It is expected that the choice of a consultant will be completed in the September/October timeframe, and that the audit itself will take up to six months to complete. It is hoped that the management audit report will be ready to present to the World Heritage Committee meeting next summer in Christ Church, New Zealand. OLIVER